

HIGHLAND PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Policy 502 **Unattended Children / Vulnerable Adults**

Purpose: To define the expectation of care for children and vulnerable adults in the Highland Park Public Library (“the Library”).

General Policy

The Library is committed to the well-being and safety of all who visit the Library. While the Library strives to provide a welcoming and safe environment, the Library is a public place in which safety cannot be guaranteed.

All persons aged eight and older who are able to care for themselves and understand and follow the Patron Conduct Policy are welcome to use the Library without accompaniment.

Unattended Children

The Library does not act *in loco parentis* (in place of parents), and Library staff are unable to provide parental-type oversight or guidance. Therefore, parents or caregivers are responsible for their children in the Library. Children under the age of eight must be directly supervised by a responsible caregiver, 14 years or older, at all times in all areas of the Library.

“Directly supervised” means the child and the caregiver must be able to observe one another at all times.

Vulnerable Adults

A “vulnerable adult” is a person who functionally, mentally, or physically is unable to care for themselves without supervision. Library facilities are not licensed to provide adult care, and staff is not trained to assist with care-related tasks. Vulnerable adults must be directly supervised by a responsible caregiver, 18 years or older, at all times in all areas of the Library.

Failure to Attend to Children or Vulnerable Adults

Library staff will attempt to contact the responsible caregiver if it is determined that:

- a) a child under the age of eight has been left unattended,
- b) a vulnerable adult has been left unattended, or
- c) a child, eight years or older, is unable or unwilling to successfully comply with the Patron Conduct Policy.

If repeated attempts fail, police may be called for the child's or vulnerable adult's protection.

Responsible caregivers must pick up their children prior to Library closing time.

Children under the age of 14 and vulnerable adults who are not picked up within 15 minutes after closing time may be placed in the custody of the Highland Park Police for their protection. In no instance will a staff member or volunteer transport or wait alone with a child or vulnerable adult.

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